



THE HON. JOEL FITZGIBBON MP Minister for Defence

Saturday, 2 May 2009

WHAT THE WHITE PAPER MEANS FOR THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

The 2009 Defence White Paper will deliver an Army for the 21st century equipped with the world class technology that it needs and deserves. It will provide significant funding to increase the combat power and survivability of the Army as well as enhancing its ability to operate as a modern networked, mobile and highly adaptable force.

This funding will be used to improve and enhance a number of elements of the Australian Army, including:

- A new Combat Vehicle System which will provide around 1100 vehicles with greatly improved firepower, protection and mobility. The System will be equipped with the Army's integrated battle management systems from inception;
- Around 7000 support vehicles to completely replace the various fleets of wheeled transport and logistic support vehicles and trucks;
- Greatly improved communications and command and control systems for land forces;
- improved mobility through the acquisition of seven new CH47F (Chinook) medium lift helicopters;
- enhanced firepower through new artillery, both self-propelled and towed, as well as replacement mortars and a new direct fire anti-armour weapon; and
- continued investment in increasing the effectiveness and protection offered to individual soldiers in dismounted close combat.

Over the next 20 years, the Army force structure will include land combat and combat support forces (infantry, armoured, artillery, combat engineers, and aviation) that are able to operate as combined-arms teams. They will be supported by enabling combat support elements (intelligence, signals and construction engineers) and combat service support systems (logistics and health).

A Defence Force for the 21st Century

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“Land forces must be capable of conducting joint land combat in a complex operational environment and be able to defeat incursions onto the Australian mainland, territories and offshore installations,” said the Minister for Defence, the Hon Joel Fitzgibbon MP.

To do this they must also be highly mobile and adaptable within the physical and social environments they find themselves. Together with the other elements of the Australian Defence Force they must be capable of assuming a leadership role for a coalition combat, stabilisation or reconstruction operation.”

“Our conventional land forces will continue to be based on three combat brigades (of around 4000 troops) consisting of multiple battalion-sized units. The growth of the two additional infantry battalions established under the Enhanced Land Force initiative will continue.”

The Army will be able to combine its combat and combat support units to generate 10 battalion-sized ‘battlegroups’ tailored for a wide range of operations.

The generation of operationally-ready land forces will be enhanced by the formation of Forces Command, located in Sydney, which will be responsible for all individual and group training. Forces Command will also take charge of the deployable logistics organisations supporting this process, along with a helicopter brigade comprising three battalion-sized units of reconnaissance, lift, and utility helicopters. Headquarters 1st Division, located in Brisbane, will re-roled to be able to provide troops with final, mission specific, preparation for operations. Headquarters Special Operations Command, located at Bungendore, will continue to provide the majority of individual, group and mission specific training for Special Forces personnel.

The Army also generates our Special Forces capability. Special Forces provide unique capabilities due to their specialised selection, training and equipment.

“Australia’s Special Forces will continue to receive the best equipment and training we can provide with incremental improvements planned and funded over the coming decade,” Mr Fitzgibbon said.

“Our Special Forces must be capable of undertaking strategic surveillance and reconnaissance, offensive action, strategic strike missions, high-end counter-terrorism and counter-Weapons of Mass Destruction operations, hostage recovery, special protection duties in high-threat environments, and other specialised roles, some of which are classified in their entirety.”

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The Government is determined to further enhance the reforms currently being undertaken by Army under the 'Adaptive Army' initiative. The Government has directed Defence to develop a detailed implementation plan by the end of 2009, ensuring that the Army's internal balance and mix of full-time and part-time land force elements can meet these objectives. This plan will be developed within the strategic guidance and funding parameters contained in the 2009 White Paper.

The 2009 Defence White Paper represents the most comprehensive statement on Defence ever produced. It affirms the Government's commitment to the defence of Australia, the protection of our sovereign interests and the security and stability of our region.

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